

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Cherokee education project

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

White oak, ramps, dogwood. All these are plants important to the Cherokee tradition, and the Forest Service has teamed with the Cherokee to expand scientific and cultural understanding of these plants and more on the part of Cherokee students.

Working with staff at the Cherokee's Snowbird Youth Center in Robbinsville, North Carolina, the Forest Service developed a learning module on culturally important plants for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Activities include an audio game that teaches the Cherokee, scientific, and common names of the 14 plants. Supplementary materials provide information about traditional uses of each plant, as well as ecological significance, ways to identify them, sustainability issues, and correct harvesting methods. The module also includes sets of small cards that children and youth can use outside to identify the plants, as well as information on creating a native plant garden.

Additional modules on climate change and water are also in development. All the modules integrate traditional ecological knowledge from the tribe and scientific knowledge from Forest Service researchers. The goal is to incorporate current science-based knowledge of the ecosystems where Cherokee youth live and to complement the traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.